

nobody knows (and nobody gives a damn, either way).

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](https://archiveofourown.org/works/76670791) at <https://archiveofourown.org/works/76670791>.

Rating:	Teen And Up Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Heated Rivalry (TV)
Relationships:	Shane Hollander/Ilya Rozanov , Kip Grady/Scott Hunter
Characters:	Scott Hunter (Game Changers) , Ilya Rozanov , Other Characters Referenced - Character
Additional Tags:	Missing Scene , Canon Compliant , Episode Coda: s01e06 Cottage , The MLH Awards , Coming Out , Ilya swinging wildly between being very sincere and being a little shit
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2025-12-30 Words: 2,426 Chapters: 1/1

nobody knows (and nobody gives a damn, either way).

by [milominderbinder](#)

Summary

"I did. After MLH awards, in June. Oh, I did not tell him about Shane and me. But what he did, it was important. It changed things. For me, at least - maybe for us."

On the night of the MLH awards, Ilya corners Scott Hunter on a quiet balcony.

Notes

so much love for all the missing scene codas featuring david and ilya but i could hardly find any with the scott scene so at 2am last night my brain decided i had to write something !! sorry for the delay on frequently secretly fond of each other, i'll be getting the next chap of that out tomorrow probably <3

See the end of the work for [more notes](#)

Is Ilya annoyed he didn't get MVP? Maybe, a little. It's not like he hasn't won it before, of course – and he doesn't really need another trophy on his shelf, but god, do they look good up there when he does get them.

It doesn't really matter this year, though. Ilya's had bigger things on his mind than hockey for most of this season. He played his hardest in the playoffs, and still has the twinge in his ribs to prove it, but Ilya's most important trophy is currently in Canada, wearing a sling, probably doing one-armed yoga with his ass in the air. The MLH can keep their golden cups; he gives the polite applause everyone else does, then busies himself with downing his free drink and trying not to look too invested when Scott Hunter takes the stage to give his speech.

After everything's been awarded, there's the reception. It's funny to Ilya, now, remembering how huge and insane this had felt in his rookie year – waiting in the crowd for the awards to be announced, going to the reception afterwards and seeing an entire room full of people who felt the weight of the hockey league like the weight of the world. Ilya had been to plenty of fancy events in his life, but he'd never felt so observed, so scrutinised. He'd barely stuck around for a few minutes before fleeing up to the rooftop to get away from it all.

Eight seasons later, this is kind of old hat. He rounds up a few guys he knows and does a few shots, trades chirps about the worst speeches and which winners didn't deserve their trophies. Compare who out of them has won the most – Ilya – and who's never won anything but will always turn up for the free drinks. It's easy.

Then, halfway through the night, Ilya turns his head, and sees Scott Hunter slipping out of the side door.

“Ah, I will be right back,” Ilya says, downs his drink, and stalks out to the hallway.

He glances around for a moment, trying to find where Hunter went. The side hallway is dark, abandoned – everyone absorbed in the warmth and spirit of the party inside. It only takes him a moment before he spots an open doorway down the hall, and Ilya heads that way, finding his way out onto a quiet, empty balcony; the warm, balmy summer air tickles his skin around the edges of his suit, and Ilya loosens his tie.

“Hunter,” he calls over. Scott Hunter, leaning on the edge of the balcony and looking at his phone, startles, turning around. He kind of straightens up when he sees Ilya, slides his phone into his pocket, posture gone taut – tentative, a little on the back foot.

Ilya gets it. He's the scary Russian guy in the league. All anyone knows about him is that he fucks women and starts fights.

“Hey, Rozanov,” Hunter says. “You good?”

“Yes, yes. I wanted to find time to speak to you, but could not fight my way through all the people. You have been very busy all night.”

“Ah, yeah. I mean, you know how it is – you’ve won these things before. Nobody’ll leave you alone,” Hunter says, waving a hand in the air like *so-so*. He’s not wrong, although Ilya thinks personally he’s got no problem getting attention at a party regardless of whether he’s won an award or not, and boring people like Shane and Hunter are probably overwhelmed by like two extra people speaking to them than normal.

“Well, that is not only big thing you did, to be fair,” Ilya points out. “No wonder they all want to talk.”

Hunter crosses his arms over his chest. He’s ditched his suit jacket at some point, just in his shirt and tie, and the crisp white shirt pulls across his arms.

“Look, Rozanov, was there something in particular you wanted to say?” Hunter asks. He looks braced. It’s a look that Ilya recognises - he’s spent his entire life braced for impact, waiting for the next cruel thing to fall on his head.

“Ah. You think I have chased you down to call you rude words. Or do what? Push you over balcony?”

“I didn’t say that, but if you have, might as well get it out now.”

“Calm down.” Ilya takes a cigarette out of his jacket pocket and lights it, leaning against the rail at the edge of the balcony. The city lights stretch out beyond the conference building, blinking at them from the darkness. Too much light to see stars above their heads, but the view is still nice. “I still think you are boring and far too old to be playing hockey, but that is it.”

“You’re a charming guy,” Hunter scoffs. “Anyone ever tell you that?”

There’s been some backlash against other Russian players, in the last few years, for not wanting to join in on pride nights – not wearing the jerseys, or using the tape. Ilya’s sure that some of them are blatant homophobes who’d fit right in with his family back home. He’s sure that others are scared of the repercussions that might face them if they speak favourably about gay people while in America and then go back to Russia someday, where promoting these things is illegal and getting worse every day. If there might be consequences for them then. If it might spread to their families. If they could put the people they love in danger by using fucking rainbow tape on their hockey stick. It probably wouldn’t happen, but who knows? Stranger things have. Worse things.

Ilya wears the jersey on pride nights. He figures blending in is the path of least resistance. He’s not sure he gets much out of it on a personal level, except imagining the look on his father’s face if he saw Ilya dressed up like a pride flag, which is a sick kind of reward. Pride nights don’t mean much to Ilya - but moves like Scott Hunter’s do.

“Many people tell me I am charming, all the time,” Ilya says. He blows out his cigarette smoke, lets the sour taste flood his mouth and the nicotine sooth his jittering nerves. He can tell Hunter is about to make some excuse and leave; who’d want to stay in this conversation? Ilya sucks it the fuck up, and says, “Anyway, I am here to say thank you.”

The silence on the balcony for a moment feels like time is frozen. The city below them is still moving, blinking and honking and whirring; the party in the other room is a thrum in the background. But out here, in the still of the summer evening, it's just their breaths, and the smoke of Ilya's cigarette filling the air.

"What for?" Hunter asks, furrowing his brow. He slowly uncrosses his arms. Leans against the balcony again, across from Ilya, a few feet apart.

"Oh, for that drink you bought me at All-Stars six years ago. Jesus. What do you fucking think?" Ilya rolls his eyes. Takes another drag of his cigarette. Doesn't look at Hunter as he says, "Big fucking deal, kissing your boyfriend on ice. So I say thank you."

Hunter says, "Wait - shit. Are you telling me what I think you are?"

That depends on how smart Hunter is and how open his tiny mind is to nuance, Ilya supposes. But essentially, yes. Isn't he? Which would make this the first time he's ever volunteered this information willingly to anyone except a man he was trying to sleep with.

And Hunter's hot, for a dinosaur, but Ilya's definitely not interested in sleeping with him. Not when he's got Shane Hollander just over the border, healing himself up in preparation for two full weeks of uninterrupted time together for the first time in their lives. Ilya can't find it in himself to be interested in sleeping with anyone else at all at the moment. He hasn't even tried since the All-Stars game, and for months before that he'd been dissatisfied and frustrated over it every time he brought a woman home. Lately, his own imagination of what they might do at Shane's cottage is enough to get him through every lonely night; their texts and facetime calls fill him with something so chest-knotting that he doubts he could try and fuck someone else without physically getting sick over his own longing. Nothing feels right without Shane anymore. Ilya's wrapped his whole life around those warm brown eyes, that smatter of freckles, this weird man who folds his clothes before sex.

Ilya says, "For nearly ten years I have been fucking one man. Oh, fucking plenty of women, too – I like that, also. But now, I will go and be with this man for my summer break. It is the first time we have ever done this, even though I have wanted to for a long time. And we do it now because you kissed your boyfriend on the ice. So I am saying thank you."

"Jesus." Scott Hunter takes a ragged breath, leans back with both his hands on the railing and looks at Ilya with his mouth half-open. "Of all the things I thought you were gonna say, that wouldn't have ever been one of them."

"I am man of mystery, I know," Ilya agrees. "Look, I am not telling whole world yet. Probably not for a long time, at least until I get citizenship for somewhere that is not Russia. I do not want to get kicked out of league and immediately sent to jail. But I figure you should know, you are not the only one."

Hunter looks at him, and his serious, focused expression momentarily reminds Ilya of Shane. Ilya turns his head away and shrugs, crossing one arm over his chest, the other dangling his cigarette. He listens to Hunter's shuddery outbreath and tries to imagine how this must feel; after decades of locking away this part of your life, how would it feel to have it all out in the open? The lack of hiding, the weight off your shoulders, Ilya's sure that must be immense.

He's sure he's never felt that free in his entire life. The other side of it, the random players you don't even know suddenly coming up to you in secret to disclose their personal lives – is that rewarding, too, or another exhausting level of pressure, like you've traded one shackle for another?

He wonders if Scott Hunter is watching sports news, or checking Twitter. Because some people have been pretty good about it, and others have been pretending to not be as weirded out as they clearly are, at least. But others have been shitty, or half-way shitty, or shitty by way of being misinformed, or just downright stupid. This big shiny award and Hunter's speech tonight was nice, but a lot of people were silent in the room.

It's not like this has really fixed anything. But it's changed things one way or another. Nobody can deny that.

Hunter stares at him and says, "I guess I thought there must be other guys, you know, guys in the league who were hiding it, but I never really tried to guess who. You wouldn't have been on the list in a million fucking years."

"You said that already," Ilya tells him. "And yes, there are other guys. You must have terrible gay-dar."

"Wait – others *plural*? You actually know that?"

Okay, Ilya only really knows about Shane, although he's sure he's caught eyes from one or two other players in his time around the league. But it's more fun to let Hunter think he's missing out on some big club, so Ilya shrugs, grins with a mouthful of fake teeth.

"Sure. You think your big gay secret was bad, you have no idea," he says. "I know things that would rock your mind."

It's not like it's a lie.

In the hallway behind them, Ilya hears a door crack, and the muffled sound of voices. He looks over his shoulder and catches the way Hunter does too, sharply, a reflex. Being out can't wipe away all those years of instinct to hide, Ilya supposes. But it's just a few rookies stumbling drunkenly away from the party, probably to get into more trouble somewhere. Ilya remembers those days, though his first MLH awards hadn't exactly been a joyful, wild experience. He'd been consumed by the uncertainty of going home to Russia for the first time since he entered the league, and torn up over Shane fucking Hollander, as usual.

They've come a long way since then, but at the same time it feels like no distance at all.

"Well, I will let you get back to whatever you were doing all alone on balcony on your big night," Ilya says, taking one more drag of his cigarette and then stubbing it out against the railing. "That is all I wanted to say."

"I was just calling my boyfriend," Hunter says, rolling his eyes, though he's got that kind of pink-cheeked happiness on that Ilya recognises as new-relationship glow. Maybe newly-out glow, if that's a similar thing.

“Ah, yes, short man from ice. He looked boring too. You did not bring him tonight?”

“Uh, no,” Hunter says. “It’s, you know – things have been pretty good, but not great. I didn’t want to make him sit through a boring event like this and not be sure that someone wasn’t gonna say something totally out of line. He doesn’t deserve that.”

No, Ilya thinks, *none of us do*.

He tells Hunter, “Next time, you bring him. I will sit by him when you are busy and be big scary Russian man so nobody says anything.”

“Jesus,” Hunter says, tilting his head to the sky and shaking it a bit, like he’s trying to shuffle his neurons around so the information will actually make sense in his mind. “Ilya fucking Rozanov.”

“That’s my name,” Ilya agrees. “Good night, Hunter. I hope you retire this summer so I do not have to beat your geriatric body up and down ice in the fall.”

“Fuck *you*-”

Ilya leaves the balcony, letting the door swing closed behind him. He could head back to the party, but instead, he turns the other way down the hallway, heading towards the elevators, and pulls out his phone. There’s already a text from Shane waiting on his screen; it would be a shame to let him wait too long.

End Notes

pls do comment if you enjoyed, i love reading them all!!
+ see [fic post on tumblr](#) ily all bye

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!